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201326Z Apr 05

UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 000390

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State for AF, AF/E, AF/PD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Essay Winners Lunch With Ambassador Ragsdale; English Clubs
Continue Positive Impact

11. (U) Winners of the Embassy's Black History Month Essay Contest attended an awards lunch this week hosted by the Ambassador at her residence on the Embassy compound. For many of the teenagers invited and their teachers, this was their first visit to the American Embassy. Members of the panel selected to evaluate the essays included the editor-in-chief of the country's largest newspaper and a prominent female attorney and an International Visitor alumnus, among others. They also attended the lunch.

12. (U) Winners - three females and one male - were selected anonymously by the panel from among about 50 students invited to submit 250 words in French or English on one of two themes: How can education influence positive change; or How can tolerance encourage progress? Four winning entries were chosen: three at the high school level and one at the university level. Prizes, which included both gift certificates to a local store and PD-donated books were presented to all the winners. Although only one of the four winners submitted her essay in English, all contestants who made the effort to write in English also received book sets. In her remarks at the lunch, the Ambassador congratulated both student winners and their teachers and thanked the selection panel for its contribution.

13. (SBU) English Club themes this week included Discrimination Against Women (Corne d'Afrique), Khat Use (Djibouti Institute) and Problems in Learning English (Balbala School of English). It is interesting to note the majority of the 50 students who attended the Balbala session reported that PD's English club offered the first chance ever to meet an American. It is also interesting to note, that about 50 percent of that same group attends Arabic school during the day.
RAGSDALE